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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
News Letter

ECHOES FROM THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

"We cannot insulate our children from the uncertainties of the world in which we live or from the impact of the problems which confront us all. What we can do . . . is to equip them to meet these problems. . . ."

So President Truman told the 6,000 participants in the White House Conference for Children and Youth, meeting in Washington, D. C., from December 3 to 7.

Other speakers, each an outstanding authority in his field, presented the essence of what is known about children's mental, emotional, and spiritual development and suggested ways to use this knowledge to help children achieve a stable and healthy personality to withstand the stresses of life.

The participants met in general sessions, in panels, and in work groups to consider the problems and issues involved. The work groups, meeting three different times, were the heart of the Conference. Each work group included youth as well as adult participants and represented many fields of interest and experience—lay and professional. Out of the discussions and joint thinking came a philosophy for future work with and for children and youth which is best illustrated by the concrete findings and recommendations of the Conference.

Findings and Recommendations

Many Conference recommendations had implications for nutritionists, and in the decade to come nutrition programs will probably take emotional factors into greater account.

Throughout the Conference, speakers and participants emphasized the principle that the way parents, teachers, and others feel about children may be more important in teaching and helping them to grow than the specific methods and techniques used.

So that information and consultation given to parents might better prepare them for their roles, the Conference recommended "That specialists and agencies . . . foster and increase parents' feelings of satisfaction and self-confidence. Material concerning the growth and development of children be made as reassuring and non-technical as possible and not hold up false standards of perfection."

Other recommendations of special meaning for nutrition committees were—
• That research on child development and adjustment be expanded.

• That the citizens of every community accept responsibility for providing and sustaining adequate programs and facilities with professional personnel for education, health, and social services.

• That schools for professional workers include in their curricula instruction in human growth and in family counseling, together with practical experience.

• That elementary, secondary, college, and community education include such appropriate experiences and studies of childhood and family life as will help young people to mature toward the role of parenthood.

• That all interested groups work in partnership to recruit, train, and use volunteer leaders for community programs, with special attention to including young people in appropriate ways.

• That school lunches be provided and that children unable to pay for lunches be furnished them free, without being differentiated from children who pay.

Nutrition committees can take heart as they see their practices reflected in various recommendations of the work groups concerned with mobilizing citizens for the improvement of conditions

affecting children and youth. Some of the discussions leading to recommendations especially in keeping with Nutrition Committee practices pertained to — total community participation . . . assessment of community needs and the use of the findings as a part of the educational process . . . provision of channels of communication for furthering common objectives and improving relations between groups . . . orientation programs for professional persons and interprofessional groups in the community.

A complete list of recommendations has been printed with the Pledge to Children. See New Materials in this issue of the NNL on how to obtain this and other materials now available. The proceedings of the Conference and a reprint of the Fact Finding Report will be published later.

Remembered Remarks

Dr. Allison Davis, Professor of Education at the University of Chicago, indicating the need for acquainting teachers with the customs of the various groups in the United States: "More than 60 out of every 100 children live in families of the lower socio-economic groups. . . . More than 95 out of every 100 teachers (and professional workers) are from the middle socio-economic groups. The teachers, therefore, . . . do not understand the behavior and goals . . . of pupils. . . . Pupils, on the other hand, do not understand . . . the teachers' culture."

Dr. Margaret Mead of the American Museum of Natural History, and familiar to us from her work on food habits: "American children are growing up within the most rapidly changing culture . . . in the world. . . . Without the help of tradition . . . we have come to rely more and more upon the new sciences of child development, and the studies of the world around us, on nutrition and pediatrics, on new forms of teaching and therapy."

Dr. Benjamin Spock of the Rochester (Minn.) Child Health Institute, famous for his book on Infant and Child Care, after reviewing child development from infancy to adulthood: "Why are so many parents unable to enjoy their children? . . . investigations (are needed) to see what educational methods, from nursery school through college, can . . . bring the boy and girl to

adulthood with the feeling that there is no more important, honorable, and soul satisfying job than having and caring for children."

Youth Participation

The number of young people participating in the Conference and the contributions they made were impressive. The Conference recommended "That progressive opportunities be provided for youth to participate vitally in community activities and planning in order that youth may early have the preparation and experience for leadership and community service. Further, that professional workers . . . stimulate the community to see that these opportunities are provided for youth."

Follow-up

Many State White House Conference Committees have held or are planning to hold conferences in their States in order to share the stimulus of the Conference with as many persons as possible, and to lay the groundwork for State and local action.

Nutrition committees may want to—
..Reconsider their programs in the light of the findings and recommendations of the Conference.

..Cooperate with other organizations working in the interest of child welfare and youth services.

..Join with citizens in efforts to solve community problems.

The film strip "Children and Youth at the Midcentury: A Report of the Council on State and Local Action," was presented as part of the States' reports to the Conference. Copies of this film strip, made by Life magazine, are to be made available to each State White House Conference Committee and arrangements for showing should be made with such committees.

Nutrition Committee chairmen might also want to arrange for broadcasting the transcriptions listed under New Materials in this issue.

Extension workers have developed specific recommendations for Extension work in the States, which apply to family life the philosophy evolved at the Conference.

Implications for Nutrition Teaching

The findings of the White House Conference were discussed at a post-conference meeting arranged by the Ameri-

New Chairmen of Nutrition Committees

Arkansas. Mrs. Geraldine Getty, Arkansas State Board of Health, Little Rock.

Indiana. Miss Mary Beeman, Ball State Teachers College, Muncie.

New Jersey. Miss Harriet Stone, Board of Education, Newark.

Puerto Rico. Miss Marta Coll, Production and Marketing Administration, USDA, San Juan.

Virginia. Dr. William R. Jordan, Medical Society of Virginia, Richmond.

West Virginia. Dr. A. H. Van-Landingham, West Virginia University, Morgantown (reelected).

can Home Economics Association and the U. S. Office of Education. Single copies of the report of this meeting may be secured from the AHEA, 724 Ninth Street N.W., Washington 1, D.C.

At this meeting, Dr. Jennie Rountree of the University of Washington stated the point of view of many home economists, as the following extracts from her talk will show: "The constant reiteration that the home and family are pre-eminent as an influence on the child makes it obvious that everything that improves the atmosphere in the home . . . helps parents feel secure within themselves and in the community adds to children's well-being, confidence, and integration.

" . . . Reassurance that these foods provide adequacy, that the schedule is of minor importance as long as the children are happy at meal hours, is what nutrition teaching often neglects. Better a meal of herbs with a calm, happy mother than a scientifically balanced combination served by a tense, anxious parent.

" . . . The meal hour is the center and nucleus of family life—the hour which we all remember when we think of home. Yet today . . . many families rarely eat together. Food has been stressed but meals neglected. . . . In happy families food is lovingly served . . . children realize that mother made this dish because it was their favorite. Are children taught

to save the telling of the nicest thing that has happened to them all day for the meal hour? Do meal hours, as we teach them, integrate the family? . . .

" Do we do as much as we might in making girls see that good cooking is an art, a creative outlet through which many are able to express themselves? . . . Girls in cooking classes should see the home kitchen . . . as a place . . . where they make their love visible through helping. . . .

" The youth at this Conference. . . . Their intense desire to participate, to face problems, to plan for the future. . . . Far too much has been done for them, far too little with them.

" In family budgeting we advocate family counsel, but does the average family show children what it is up against and let children work out solutions? Many children are kept on the fringes, never let in on the actual problem."

FUN AND EDUCATION COMBINE IN PARIS

There's an idea or two for nutrition education programs relating to children in the Third Annual Children's Fair of Paris, France, in which fun for children and information for parents were combined. Public and private organizations cooperated with the toy industry according to the UNESCO World Review for December 23, 1950.

Manufacturers supplied dolls, electric trains, and games for children to operate. While the children were playing, their parents could find answers to their questions from the experts stationed at booths to advise on problems of children and youth.

This school for parents was set up at the Fair by the National Union of Parents' Associations at the request of the French Ministry of Health. Also taking part were UNICEF, UNESCO, and ILO. Exhibits from the United States, Great Britain, Morocco, Tunisia, Austria, Argentina, and other countries showed their work in social welfare.

TEN BEST SELLERS

A list of the ten Best Sellers, nutritionwise, was distributed to those attending the 78th annual meeting of the American Public Health Association in October 1950. The Best Sellers

were the most popular nutrition pamphlets, books, posters, and films used for education of Health Department personnel.

Receiving the most votes on the 108 questionnaires returned by nutritionists in 24 State and local communities was the film "The School That Learned to Eat," produced by General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn., in 1948. The second was the poster "The Wheel of Good Eating," issued by the American Institute of Baking, 1135 West Fullerton Ave., Chicago 14, Ill. Others in order of their popularity were—

The book "Nutrition in Public Health," by Lucy H. Gillett, published by W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, Pa. 1946.

The pamphlet "Nutrition and You," by W. Wilkins and F. Boyd, Box 210, Jacksonville, Fla. 2nd ed., 1947.

The film "Why Won't Tommy Eat," by the National Film Board of Canada, 620 Fifth Ave., New York 20, N. Y. 1948.

The film "Something You Didn't Eat," obtainable from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C. 1945.

The pamphlet "The Road to Good Nutrition," by Lydia Roberts, published by the U. S. Children's Bureau, Washington 25, D.C. 1942.

The book "Food Values of Portions Commonly Used," by A. D. Bowes and C. F. Church. Published by the Philadelphia Child Health Society, Philadelphia, Pa. 6th ed., 1946.

The leaflet "National Food Guide," Leaflet 288, issued by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, USDA, Washington 25, D.C. 1946.

The bulletin "Helping Families Plan Food Budgets," Misc. Pub. 662, by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, USDA, Washington 25, D.C. 1950.

The lists of the most popular nutrition films, books, posters, and pamphlets were part of an exhibit in the Health Education Center at the APHA conference. Copies may be secured from Mrs. Iva B. Bennett, New York City Department of Health, 125 Worth Street, New York 13, N. Y.

NEW MATERIALS

Available from White House Conference, Federal Security Agency, Washington 25, D.C.

Children and Youth at the Midcentury. Pamphlets prepared for the Conference to supply the members of working groups and others attending the Conference with a common base and a point of departure for discussion. The price is given after each item. Check or money order should be made payable to White House Conference. Subtitles of pamphlets as follows:

..A Chart Book. A Graphic Presentation of Social and Economic Facts Important in the Lives of Children and Youth. (75 charts with statements relating to the material on each chart.) 1950. \$1.00 a copy.

..Report on State and Local Action. (The story of State and local committees, how they prepared for the Conference, and their experience in working together as an advisory council.) 61 pp. 1950. 75 cents a copy.

..Report (of Advisory Councils) on Youth, National Organizations, and Federal Government. 122 pp. 1950. 75 cents.

Pledge to Children, and Recommendations adopted by the Conference. 30 pp. 1950. Single copies free.

Recordings of selected speeches made at the Conference. 16-inch transcriptions, 14 sides, to be played on 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ r.p.m. professional play-back machines. Suitable for radio broadcast. \$10.00 a set.

Available from Survey Associates, Inc., 112 East 19th St., New York 3, N. Y.

The Survey, January 1951. (Contains a special section on the Midcentury White House Conference for Children and Youth.) 50 cents. Reprints of this section cost 15 cents a single copy or \$3.00 for 25 copies.

Available from American Home Economics Association, 724 Ninth St., N.W., Washington 1, D.C.

Journal of Home Economics. (Nov. 1950 and Feb. and Mar. 1951 issues contain articles relating to the White House Conference.) 50 cents a copy.